



**Missouri Workforce Development Board**  
September 8, 2021 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Sheraton at Crown Center**  
**Kansas City, Missouri**

**Members Present:** Chair Len Toenjes, Vice Chair Cara Canon (proxy), Garland Barton, Greta Bax, Tony Bryan, Celeste Cramer, Kristie Davis, Astra Ferris, Assistant Commissioner Tim Gaines, Stephanie Garrett, Sen. Denny Hoskins, Director Anna Hui, Commissioner Gary Jungermann, Kathy Lambert (proxy), Commissioner Zora Mulligan, Gregg Roberts, LeRoy Stromberg, Joshua Tennison (proxy), Virgil White, and Jill Williams

**SWDB Staff:** Allyssa Johnson and Dr. Mardy Leathers

**CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME:** Chair Len Toenjes called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and welcomed everyone.

**ROLL CALL:** Allyssa Johnson conducted roll call and quorum was declared.

**REVIEW & APPROVE MINUTES JUNE 8-9, 2021:** Chair Toenjes asked for a motion to approve the minutes from June 8-9, 2021 meeting. Garland Barton moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Gary Jungermann seconded. The minutes were approved.

**BOARD NEW BUSINESS—TRADE ACT ASSISTANCE:** Jennifer Roodhouse reviewed the Trade Act Assistance program as a federal program to support workers who were impacted by a foreign trade layoff to be reemployed. This includes connecting those impacted to apprenticeship programs or On-The-Job-Training programs. The state's Trade Act Representatives and Navigators support employers and workers in gaining access to this federal program. This includes: Dura Automotive Systems, Ascension Technologies, Masonite, Architectural, and Reyco Granning LLC.

Chair Toenjes asked how this effort is coordinated with the Local Workforce Development Boards. Jennifer outlined that these efforts are coordinated with the local regions, however one challenge is the significant lag time in the Trade Act certifications approved by USDOL.

**BOARD NEW BUSINESS—WIOA STATE PLAN:** Yvonne Wright shared the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) has begun drafting modifications to update changes in programs, grants, and merit staffing. The modified WIOA State Plan will be presented at the January 2022 State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) meeting. Yvonne recommended the modified plan be first presented to the SWDB Executive Committee for initial review. Chair Toenjes asked if any other board members besides the Executive Committee would like to be involved in the process. Gregg Roberts requested to be a part of the WIOA State Plan process.

**BOARD NEW BUSINESS—2022 SWDB MEETING DATES:** Chair Toenjes presented: January 27<sup>th</sup>, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, June 9<sup>th</sup> & June 10<sup>th</sup>, August 31<sup>st</sup>, and November 9<sup>th</sup> as the meeting dates and requested a motion to approve.

Commissioner Zora Mulligan moved to approve the meeting dates and Commissioner Gary Jungermann approved.

**DHEWD STRATEGIC PLAN:** Commissioner Mulligan reviewed the successful efforts under the new department such as MoExcels, Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) Summit, Fast Track, and overall improving the department's culture. In the process of developing the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development's (DHEWD) strategic plan, it is important the department considers the state's needs and the role of the department. The department has limited statutory power in higher education, but understanding where the department can influence increasing credential attainment and postsecondary degree attainment. However, Missouri is second in the nation in apprenticeships and 20% of apprenticeship participation is of diverse backgrounds. Chair Toenjes asked how postsecondary enrollments compares nationally. Commissioner Mulligan responded that adult enrollment has drastically declined.

Gregg Roberts asked if this is due to schools offering online courses, so students can attend any school. Commissioner Mulligan responded that Missourians understand a good wage can be obtained without a degree. Dr. John Gaal moved to adjourn and Tony Bryan seconded.

Chair Toenjes asked about the number of individuals taking advantage of the Fast Track program. Commissioner Mulligan described the claw back provision as a barrier and complicated which creates uncertainty for Missourians.

**OPEN DISCUSSION—ROUND TABLE ON HIRING CHALLENGES:** Chair Toenjes asked SWDB members to discuss the existing hiring challenges that are faced. Gregg Roberts described employees leaving without another job secured. To mitigate this challenge Gregg's employer has offered benefits immediately, increase paid time off, and modified education level requirements. Further, Gregg's employer is considering investments in technology to better support the employees.

Virgil White reported Evergy is regularly connecting with the Full Employment Council to diversify the talent and offer sustainable employment in the Kansas City region. These connections occur quarterly.

Greta Bax shared that at AFL-CIO the workforce is aging with the average age at 40 years old.

Astra Ferris stated that the Barton Chamber of Commerce is connecting with manufacturing employers to provide hiring fairs to connect with talent in the area.

Celeste Cramer stated CoxHealth has raised minimum wage to attract talent. The talent pool is limited in the healthcare setting because vaccinations are required and several other restrictions in place.

Chair Toenjes shared in the construction industry workers are leaving for other job opportunities.

Jill Williams stated that several hospitals are offering hiring bonuses which is new for entry level positions. There is still an increased demand for respiratory therapy with a lack of training programs available. Burnout and resiliency in the healthcare industry are difficult during the pandemic.

Garland Barton explained the difficulty in getting Missourians enrolled into programs and at times Missourians do not show up for the first day of work.

Director Hui expressed her appreciation for the partnership for the complex workforce system. The additional federal unemployment programs supporting Missourians during a devastating time. The Department of Labor and

Industrial Relations have had several conversations with employers to understand how childcare and other essential support needed to bring employees back.

Commissioner Gary Jungermann agrees with other SWDB members that childcare continues to be a challenge and encourages employers to become involved in resolving this issue.

LeRoy Stromberg shared that not all positions are remote and some jobs require in person work.

**FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:** Ron Painter, President and CEO of the National Association of Workforce Boards shared that the U.S. House is interested in supporting workforce development. There has been a particular focus on serving opportunity youth, apprenticeship programs, and reskilling those who are considered long-term unemployed. The U.S. Congress is also concerned with automation and how this will impact the workforce. As the National Association of Workforce Boards, there is an opportunity to equipped members of Congress with information on aligning other workforce programs to better serve citizens.

**MERIC ANNUAL REPORT:** Veronica Gielazauska, Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Strategy & Performance, shared the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) report includes economic and workforce data. MERIC has analyzed short-term and long-term workforce projections to better understand how to guide job seekers and employers within the public workforce system. This analysis includes a deeper dive in specific industries that can be shared with job seekers in the center to better grasp the career pathway as a whole. MERIC continues to engage with key stakeholders in the community such as chambers of commerce, community colleges, and employers broadly. One of the existing challenges is training and outreach due to the significant amount of data and information that is available. MERIC is launching a series of training videos to increase the reach and access of information publically available.

Garland Barton asked where the customer survey data goes because he doesn't believe it is representative of the state. Veronica responded that a boots on the ground perspective is very helpful in addition to the data that is available. Dr. Mardy Leathers added that Burning Glass data allows for real time information for online job postings and the current needs.

Garland Barton commented that the data lags in regards to wages of those who received employment.

LeRoy asked if MERIC was studying remote work in Missouri and its impact.

Veronica shared that the 2020 employer survey will help us understand some aspects of remote work, staffing patterns, and ongoing demographic changes.

**STATE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE:** Dr. Mardy Leathers shared that the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) has completed six of the nine town hall events for the Job Centers of the Future effort. The town halls include information on population dynamics, in which Missouri's population is declining in key areas such as those between 18-24 and 45-55. This will greatly impact the workforce dynamics and the available workforce overall. Missouri's Office of Workforce Development is investing in virtual services such as a robust call center and reposition staff to support citizens remotely. This also includes an investment in Coursera to offer self-paced online learning to Missourians over the age of 18 with more than 5,000 available courses. This investment does not replace community college workforce programs, but adds another opportunity to access training.

Apprenticeship Missouri has invested in pre-apprenticeship programs, including the expansion of Building Union Diversity (BUDs) program to Kansas City and Springfield.

To better engage youth, OWD is working with Jobs for Americas Graduates (JAG). JAG is located in 100 schools and plans to support the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Through this partnership the public workforce system will be able to connect and enroll more Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth.

Dr. Leathers presented an opportunity to launch Missouri Job Ready Day 1, which seeks prepare citizens with soft skills to enter employment. This program would occur across all 27 Missouri job centers and require in person attendance for citizens. Dr. Leathers requested input from SWDB members on this effort.

Commissioner Mulligan requested the consideration of performance goals for the program.

Astra Ferris requested the marketing efforts through social media such as Tik Tok to attract a younger workforce.

Celeste Cramer commented that understanding the background and upbringing of citizens is important and will help employers understand the challenges of employees they are engaging with.

Jill Williams asked how this opportunity will be marketed to employers.

Dr. Leathers responded that the Employer Relations and Engagement team will engage local employers for their involvement and perspective.

**LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD REPORT:** Clyde McQueen shared his guiding principles to serve citizens which includes serving the whole citizen. Clyde review the population of the Kansas City & Vicinity and East Jackson regions, as well as the job center locations to serve citizens. He also shared the performance of the two Local Workforce Development Board regions and the region's industry focus.

Due to the complexities of the pandemic, documentation gathering and delivering job center services changed, which included offering zoom and drive through job fairs. The job center staff were using cell phones and laptops to continue job center services. The job centers were modified to include proper social distancing spacing and Plexiglas.

The job centers focused on healthcare, information technology, advanced manufacturing and construction to support citizens need for employment. This included citizens' placement into apprenticeship programs and other training opportunities. This required close partnership with employers and training providers to ensure citizens had the opportunity for successful earn and learn models.

**WIOA PUBLIC PARTNER UPDATE—USDOL:** Lori Harris, Federal Project Officer with the United States Department of Labor, presented to the SWDB on the relationship between USDOL and the state, which includes monitoring and technical assistance. She highlighted that the SWDB is the central governing body of the state, which is why USDOL always monitors the board for engagement and membership. Lori offered a list of five most importance aspects of the SWDB, which includes stewards of federal and non-federal funds and resources. The proper allocation of funds to the local boards is foundational to the state board. Another important aspect is system building, which includes convening and engaging stakeholders. The strategic nature of the board serves as the primary architect, especially with the majority of the board representing business. Implementing effective system operations is the third aspect of the SWDB. This includes the WIOA State Plan and ensuring effective coordination through this living document. The fourth aspect of the board is the oversight of Title I and Title II

Programs to ensure performance is met within the one stop centers. The fifth aspect is establishing and maintaining the workforce development board governance.

Chair Toenjes asked, what strengths she sees in Missouri's SWDB.

Lori responded that the board is robust and engaged.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE:** Ronda Anderson presented the six WIOA common measures and its preliminary performance, which will be reported to USDOL in the coming weeks. These numbers are reflective of serving citizens through Missouri's public workforce system. The SLATE region has two dots because there is not a statistical significance to reflect performance numbers.

Chair Toenjes asked, why SLATE had two dots. Director Anna Hui followed up with how OWD can get data that is not suppressed.

Ronda Anderson responded that there are not enough citizens within the data to reflect a number of statistical significance. Becky Fletcher followed up with, this is a concern the OWD continues to work with SLATE on. For example, SLATE only enrolled two dislocated workers in the program.

Chair Toenjes recommended OWD continues to work closely with SLATE on this to resolve the issues.

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND CLOSING REMARKS:** Chair Toenjes thanked all of the presenters for the slides and information. He also thanked all of the board members for taking the time to participate in the meeting and thanked Dr. Mardy Leathers for his leadership.

Director Anna Hui moved to adjourn and Astra Ferris seconded.

The meeting ended at 4:15 P.M.